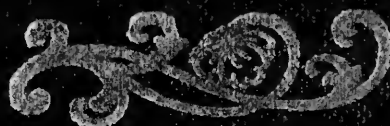


Methodism

in the

Belpier Circuit,

1760-1903.



Ms A 57

Dear Sir

Milford Derby

Copy enclosed. with thanks

If you can commend to any
interested in early Meth. you
will do me a favour

F M Jackson Esq

Yrs M Arthur Fletcher

Bu 73. B4 F4

TS coll.

✓

922.7
284
RECORDS OF

Wesleyan Methodism

IN THE

BELPER CIRCUIT,

1760—1903.

BY

G. ARTHUR FLETCHER.



“I went immediately to the Market Place (Belper), and standing under a large tree, testified—‘This is life eternal to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.’”

John Wesley, Wednesday, July 5th, 1786.



Tom Brown, Printer, King Street, Belper, and St. Peter's Street, Derby.

1903.

BW 73
B4F4

As a memorial of the Circuit Centenary, these Records have been compiled at the request of the Quarterly Meeting. They are the condensed result of several years careful research. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, and nothing is set down but what is believed to be true.

The writer expresses his thanks to several correspondents—in and out of the Circuit—for their valued help.

*Milford, Derbyshire,
November, 1903.*

Wes. 57



Early Work and Workers.

JOHAN WESLEY in the first few years of the existence of Methodism, paid several visits to Derbyshire. In his Journal under date July 10th, 1741, we have his first recorded visit. Arriving at 6 in the evening at Ockbrook, he preached in the Church at 8, and again early next morning. From there he went to Nottingham: the next day found him in Leicestershire, and the day following he was back in Derbyshire. In 1742, he preached at Melbourne, Ockbrook and at Ripley. In 1743 and 1744, he was several times in the Peak. And thus early in our history, he was found crossing the hills and dales of Derbyshire, startling and arousing its inhabitants by his faithful preaching. In his Journal he records visiting during his long and laborious life the following places in the County, *viz.* Derby (15 times), Chesterfield, Buxton, Ashbourne, Ilkeston, Alfreton, Matlock Bath, Crich, Belper, Melbourne, and several times in the Peak.

His notes on some of these places are full of interest. In 1761, he writes "I rode to Matlock Bath...Many of our friends were come from various parts. At six I preached, standing under the hollow of a rock on one side of a small plain, on the other side of which was a tall mountain. There were many well-dressed hearers, this being the high season, and all of them behaved well..." When at Crich, in 1766, where a new chapel had just been erected, he says "At ten I preached in their new house at Creitch, about twelve miles from Derby, to a loving, simple hearted people, many of whom felt what I spoke of

fellowship with the Father, and with the Son." But the most interesting is dated "Wed., July 5th, 1786. Notice was given without my knowledge of my preaching at Belper, seven miles short of Derby. I was nothing glad of this, as it obliged me to quit the turnpike road to hobble over a miserable common. The people, gathered from all parts, were waiting. So I went immediately to the Market Place, and, standing under a large tree, testified 'This is life eternal to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.' " The night previous he had preached at Sheffield, and on the evening of the day that he was at Belper, he preached at Derby. He was then 83 years old.

Derbyshire was also visited by many of the early Methodist Preachers—those brave and hardy pioneers of Methodism. One was John Nelson, the celebrated Stone-mason of Birstall. He records violent persecution at the hands of a clergyman at Monyash. Another was Richard Boardman, who, on his way to Bristol to embark for New York, tarried awhile at this same Monyash, and preached from the prayer of Jabez—I Chron. iv. 9-10—which resulted in the conversion of Mary Redfern, who subsequently became the mother of Dr. Bunting, and who was led to give the name of Jabez to her first born son in remembrance of the text, and what she experienced under that sermon.

Methodism first obtained a foothold in the town of Derby in 1761, through the settlement there of Mr. and Mrs. Dobinson—members of the Society in London. John Wesley preached in their house the following year. In 1765, the first Chapel in town and county was built in St. Michael's Lane. The building still remains, though long devoted to secular purposes. In 1766, a Chapel was built at Crich in which John Wesley preached the same year. Enlarged at an early date, it is now by far the oldest Methodist building continuously used for Methodist Services, and the friends point with pride to the pulpit as the original actually used by our Founder.

In 1746, there were only seven Circuits in the Kingdom—the fifth was "Yorkshire," including Cheshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Notts., Rutland and Lincolnshire. In 1748, the Circuits had increased to nine, the seventh was Cheshire, including Notts., Derbyshire, Lancashire and Sheffield. In 1765, "Derbyshire" stood alone and embraced the whole County. In 1776, Nottingham was made the head of a Circuit, and

included Derby, Mansfield and Ilkeston. In 1782, Derby old borough with 7,000 or 8,000 inhabitants became the head of a Circuit which included Belper. The earliest records bear date 1791. It then embraced 40 places—stretching from Uttoxeter to Stanton-by-Dale, and from Ashby to Winster. Only three places now in the Belper Circuit were included, *viz.* Duffield, Belper and Horsley Woodhouse.

In 1798, there were twelve Local Preachers on the Circuit Plan—William Bowden, Derby; Thos. Slater, Edward Street, Wm. Palmer, Francis Moore, and Benjamin Gregory, all of Belper; P. Ludlam, South Wingfield; Wm. Wain, Alfreton; Thos. Spicer, Lea; and Jas. Chambers, Spondon. Thus the head of the Circuit only supplied one Local Preacher whilst Belper had five. In 1799, Belper returned 164 members—the highest in the Circuit, whilst Derby had only 133. In the Quarterly Collection Derby raised £3 2s. 6d., and Belper £2 6s. 3d.





The Circuit Chronicles.

WITH the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, Belper was seen to be fitted both numerically and geographically to become the head of a new Circuit. This was arranged by the Conference in 1803; and Wm. McAllum and Wm. France were appointed the first Ministers. The following is the list of places and membership comprised in the new Circuit:—

Belper	176	Alfreton	33	Pentridge	20
Cromford	12	Skegby	15	Wirksworth	30
Winster	10	Stainsby	25	Woodhouse	49
Wheatcroft	8	Heage	7	Ripley	11
Tansley	10	Normanton	18	Wardgate	11
Milltown	16	Crich	13	Duffield	12
Higham	15	Wingfield Park	13		

In 1805, Youlgreave, Stanton, Middleton and Bolsover were added to the Circuit, but two years later these four places with 40 Members, "are given to the Chesterfield Circuit."

In 1807, Cromford was made a Home Mission Station, but its connection with Belper was still retained. Its second minister was the celebrated James Everett, who resided at Cromford and laboured with great success for one year. In his autobiography there is interesting allusion to his work here, and he also gives pen and ink sketches of his colleagues in the Belper Circuit.

In 1811, Cromford, Matlock and the Villages included in the Mission were raised into an independent Circuit, appearing in the Minutes for that year as Matlock Bath and Cromford.

In 1847, Ripley was taken from Belper and made the head of a new Circuit with Revs. Wm. Griffith and W. Fox as its first ministers.

So far we have given the official history of the Circuit. We must now retrace our steps and describe the personal element in the building up of the work of God.

Methodism originated in this neighbourhood about the year 1766. A Chapel had been built in Derby in 1765, and one in Crich in 1766. With these exceptions there was no Society or Preaching-house for many miles around.

Good old Thomas Slater—a farmer—of Shottle, was undoubtedly the first Methodist in this neighbourhood. A sketch of his remarkable life appears later in this history. Converted in Crich Chapel in 1765, he immediately joined the Society



THE FARM KITCHEN, SHOTTLE.

Where the first services were held.

there, and in 1767 opened his own house, now known as the Chapel Farm, Shottle, for Divine Worship. Leicestershire, Cheshire and Derbyshire were then included in one Circuit—known as the “Derbyshire Round”—and Shottle was regularly

visited by the "Round" preachers. The Farm Kitchen was capable of holding 40 to 50 people, and here such notable Methodist preachers as Thos. Olivers, Francis Asbury and Samuel Bardsley delivered the Gospel message. Mr. Slater not only opened his door for preaching, but hospitably entertained the servants of the Lord in their periodical visits—and it is worthy of note that in this same old farm-house, without a single break from 1767 to the present time—Methodist Ministers and Local Preachers have met with a cordial welcome at the hands of the successive families who have occupied it. About 1770, Mr. Slater became a recognised Local Preacher, and for nearly 50 years with mighty power he delivered the Gospel

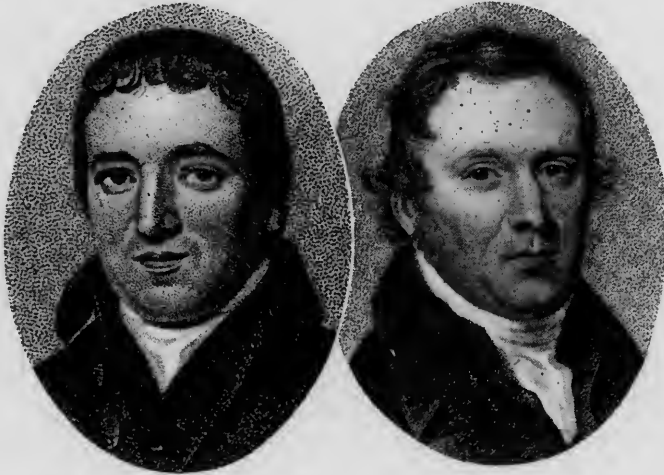


KING STREET, DUFFIELD.

One of Parson Slater's first open air preaching places.

message throughout the County, and by God's blessing was the means of establishing more Methodist Societies than any other of his generation. After gathering a Society through his street preaching in Duffield, he hired a room there for the Winter of 1770-1. This was probably the first separate meeting house. In Belper, the Market Place was the favourite resort of the Methodists until Mr. Slater gave the land for the first Chapel in 1781.

Of the spiritual work accomplished there is much evidence. The formation of the Circuit in 1803 was the means of infusing new life throughout the Societies, and the Membership of 500 was in eight years raised to 1,090. And though this was followed by a material decrease in the years following owing



REV. WM. MCALLUM.

REV. WM. FRANCE.

The First Ministers. 1803.

to the early separation of the Cromford Circuit, it was more than recovered under the ministry of the Revs. Richard Pattison and Hugh Beech in 1815-6. This was a season of extraordinary revival, extending over the entire Circuit. The blessed work began in an unexpected way when Mr. Beech was preaching in Belper Chapel, he was favoured with such a descent of Divine Power that he was obliged to come down from the pulpit and commence a prayer meeting. This proved a spark from whence proceeded a fire which set the whole Circuit on a blaze; every Society caught the flame and kept steadily burning during the two years of Mr. Beech's labours. On leaving the Circuit he wrote "On Monday night I preached my last sermon in Belper. The Chapel was crowded, and I never felt more Divinely assisted. Many tears were shed, both on the part of the hearers and on mine. I am over-powered with a sense of the goodness of God in reviewing the two years I have spent here. I came in fear and trembling; but the people bore with my imperfections, and the kindness they have shown me will never be effaced from my heart. We found 500 members, and

we leave 1,370."* Messrs. Pattison and Beech were men of kindred spirits and thoroughly devoted to their work. Mrs. Pattison was an eminently holy and useful woman, taking an active part in this Revival. Sixty years afterwards, her name was said to be held in the greatest esteem and veneration by the older members. A Local Preacher—Elliott Jones—also shared in this work. He entered the Ministry in 1819.

Other Ministers at this early period were the venerable Jos. Taylor, Sen., Ex-President of the Conference, "one who had all the faith and more than the love of an Old Testament Patriarch." Thomas Skelton, a tall, well-built, dignified personage, whose judgment was greatly respected. Richard Wintle, of plain, unassuming manners, one who moved slowly but surely, and seldom had to retrace his steps. John Hudson, simple hearted, kind, animated as a preacher, with a good voice and delivery. John Bustard, a studious man, stiff and precise.

The Circuit at this period had a remarkable band of Local Preachers, several of whom entered the Ministry. Reference is made to two of these in a letter from Mr. John Bourne to the Rev. J. Everett: "Laund Cottage, Belper, Feb. 25th, 1817.....



REV. A. B. HOLFORD,
1900.



REV. E. H. SCOTT,
1901.



REV. WM. SHARPLEY,
1903.

Ministers at the end of the first 100 years.

*These figures do not agree with the Returns in the "Minutes."

John Smedley was but a boy when you were in this Circuit. He was an apprentice of ours. He has gone to the West Indies as a missionary. I went with him to London, and he sailed from Gravesend before I left. We have another very astonishing young man, a local preacher fit for any Circuit in England—Quintin Reynolds. He will be out of his apprenticeship betwixt now and next Conference. He will be proposed at our next Quarterly Meeting to go out. He really is a most astonishing young man. We have several others whom it is a treat to hear preach." John Smedley laboured faithfully 50 years and died in 1868. Quintin Reynolds began to preach when he was 16. It is said he went regularly to Derby to hear Dr. A. Clark preach Missionary Sermons on Easter Sunday—then in his boy's jacket he would repeat from memory one of the discourses as a Missionary appeal all round the Circuit. On entering the Ministry he was seen to be of remarkable promise, but after three years' service he was called to his reward.

In 1820, the Circuit had been enlarged by the opening of Preaching places at:

Hazzelwood,	Langley,	Riddings,	Codnör,
Pottery,	Heanor,	Shirland,	Swanwick,
Shottle,	Turnditch,	Ireton Wood,	Loscoe,
Horsley,	Ithersay,	Denby,	Lee Lane,
	Buckland Hollow,	Benty.	

From 1820 to 1835, the membership was steadily maintained between 1,000 and 1,200. Then the numbers rapidly increased until in 1840 there were 1,820 members. This was the high-water mark of the Circuit—never equalled since. Among the Ministers who laboured during this period were some whose names are still a memory in the Circuit: Joseph Meek, William Constable, a man of means who laboured without stipend; William Coultas, the father of the "literary Harland Coultas," full of energy and animation; Joseph Armstrong, bright spirited, stout and strong, whose name is worthily preserved to Methodism in that of the Rev. G. Armstrong Bennetts; Ralph Gibson, father of Rev. Wm. Gibson, B.A., so well known in French Methodism; William Fowler, Chairman of the District at the time, an eloquent preacher, the ablest of his contemporaries; Daniel S. Tatham, a persistent preacher on Entire Sanctification; James Brooke, gentle hearted and beneficent; Wm. Elton, a "hitting" preacher, justly popular; Thos.

Edwards, a most devoted man of God, who had given up for the sake of Methodism the prospect of a University Education and a rich preferment, his father being a wealthy Clergyman.

Benjamin Gregory also settled at Belper in 1829, to spend a long Supernumaryship. In 1827, James J. Topham, a native of Pentrich, and a Belper Local Preacher, entered the ministry. In 1837, when a number of new chapels, raised mainly through the enterprise and liberality of Mr. Nuttall, necessitated a third minister, a vehement opposition was raised by the spokesman of the Local Preachers—Joseph Palmer—on the ground that an additional minister would lessen the frequency of the appearance of the Local Preachers in the larger chapels, and that thus he and the rest would be “gloriously mixed up with Turnditch and Itherigehay”—the two smallest places in the Circuit. But Mr. Palmer was outvoted, and within four years, the Circuit, by reason of its rapid growth, applied for a fourth minister.

In 1840, besides five ministers, there was a staff of 50 Local Preachers—many of them men of prominence and power. To name a few : John Slater, the son of “Parson Slater” ; T. Argile, who many a time preached from “God is Love” ; Geo. Calladine, who always commenced service with the hymn on the “fortieth page” ; Joseph Palmer, an active member of the first aggregate meeting of the Mutual Aid Association ; J. Crooks ; W. Penny, who left a large legacy to the Mutual Aid ; D. Norman ; T. Woollands and T. Gamble. By many such honoured servants of God the spiritual life of the Circuit was fanned into a mighty flame. In 1827-8, a gracious revival had broken out, and many of the places shared in it, and from this time the Circuit entered upon its palmiest days.

In 1839, the Connexion celebrated the Centenary of the commencement of Methodism — and a fund was raised of £216,000, towards which the Belper Circuit contributed £543 11s. 5d.

In 1840, the Circuit included 36 preaching places—the following having been added :

Milford,	Kilbourne,	Toad Moor,
Denby Pottery,	Holbrook Moor,	Upper Shottle,
Denby Common,	Woodhouse Hill Top,	Sandy Ford and Dally,
Pinxton,	Ironville,	Street Lane,
Pinxton Wharf,	Nether Heage,	Belper Bridge.

Thus in two periods of twenty years each we have seen the phenomenal growth of the Circuit. At this time it was described "as the garden of the Lord" — full of evangelistic zeal and vigour. Alas! what changes the next twenty years were to bring.

From 1840, the Circuit had had some excellent ministers. Rev. Thos. Powell, the author of "Apostolical Succession," was the son of a farm labourer, and one himself until he was 25, by dint of heroic industry and self-denial he accumulated a vast store of Latin, Greek and English learning, and also a rare literary and logical expertness; Thos. Eckersley, who literally foamed like a war horse with the ardour of his spirit; Richard Sargeant; John Gregory; and the sainted Samuel Fiddian, whose prayers seemed to take heaven by storm.

In this period a number of Local Preachers entered the ministry: Gervase Smith, of Heanor, who became President of the Conference in 1875, of a kind and genial disposition, he was noted for his sanctified eloquence, evangelical preaching, and his outspokenness on public questions; W. T. Nelson, of Heanor; George Alton, of Belper, who in Mr. Nuttall's shop (now Loverock's), developed those distinguished business abilities which afterwards proved so serviceable in his career as Missionary, Superintendent of an English Circuit and Chairman of a District; and G. Lesson, of Alfreton, who was accepted, but died before entering the work. Of the Local Preachers in addition to those named earlier, brief mention must be made of T. Sanders, I. Heapey, S. Allcock (whose favourite expression was "For this thing was not done in a corner"), S. Froggatt, H. Winson and J. W. Nuttall of Belper, Joshua Mather of Heanor, T. Slack of Ripley, and J. Beardsley of Shottle. There were giants in those days, and probably such a staff of "Locals" has never been surpassed—men who were mighty in the Scriptures and powerful in prayer. Joshua Mather was perhaps the most popular—his presence made sunshine and his countenance was a perpetual benediction and a proclamation of the pleasantness of religion. His favourite quotation was "O that my every breath were praise." He had also a remarkable contralto voice, and was called "the sweet singer of Heanor." "Jozua" was a rallying point of loyalty during the Reform Agitation. On first appearing in the Heanor pulpit after that paroxysm had reached its height, he gave out as his text "None of these things *move* me."

In 1847, steps were taken for dividing the Circuit, and Ripley with a number of small towns and villages became a new Circuit with the Rev. Wm. Griffiths as its first Superintendent. Belper was left with 19 preaching places; before the division there was a membership of 1,554, whilst the following year Belper returned 883. This was amicably arranged, but it was the reverse of the policy which serves our united country Circuits so well to-day.

We now approach the period when it is necessary for us to touch lightly upon the saddening events of the Reform Agitation of 1849-51. Of the *causes* which led to the disruption no more impartial or enlightening account can be found than the late Rev. Dr. Gregory's "Side-lights." Of the *results* to this Circuit, the history of the latter half of the century compared with the first half speaks only too plainly. The storm broke over the Connexion generally in 1849, but it was 1850 before it was felt in Belper. The Superintendent ruthlessly crossed the names from the Class-books of all whom *he* thought tainted—to the sincere distress of many pious souls, to whom this action was like shutting them out of the Kingdom of Heaven—what wonder that they were driven into the ranks of the Reformers! Loyalists and dissentients alike agree that but for this man—the mutterings of the storm alone would have been heard in Belper. When all too late, Messrs. Shaw and Featherstone were sent "to pacify the Circuit," loyalists and dissentients again agree that under such men there would have been no "split," but alas, the bitterness engendered was now an insurmountable barrier, and the membership of 919 was reduced to 360. Following the weakening of the Circuit by the separation of Ripley, coupled with the local popularity of Mr. Everett, and that Messrs. Griffiths and Dunn remained in the neighbourhood, it is scarcely to be wondered at that Wesleyan Methodism received such a blow, as the passing of two generations has not sufficed to overcome.

After the crisis there was a natural delay in issuing a new Plan. At length it appeared, bearing date Nov. 17th, 1850, and with the following footnote. "N.B.—As there may be a few friends who are not acquainted with the cause of the unusual delay in issuing a new Plan: nor the occasion of the considerable alterations in the List of Local Preachers now presented to them; it is expedient to state, that in the (so called) 'Wesleyan Times' for the 7th of October, under the head of

‘Belper’ it was stated—‘Twenty-one of the Local Preachers on Monday the 30th ultimo, agreed that on Saturday, a document signed by them, in which they gave up their Plans, was to be forwarded to the Superintendent.’ To which was added ‘A new Plan will be made out, and the People will have the Gospel from the Local Preachers. The Conference Party are left with seven or eight Local Preachers, and some of them so old as to be scarcely able to preach; and others mere Youths.’ During the week they thought proper to alter their course, for on the Saturday night, when the resignation of their plans was to have taken place, the Superintendent received five propositions with their signatures appended. To these Propositions was prefixed the following statement: ‘Should your reply be favourable to our wishes we shall be most happy to take our appointments on the New Plan.’ The Superintendent’s Judgment, and Conscience being decidedly opposed to the said Propositions, an answer to that effect was forwarded to them.” This is the whole of the Official Account preserved of this heartbreaking time. The result was that 33 Local Preachers were reduced to 14, and four Chapels were lost to the Connexion.

Of the Ministers who laboured here in the succeeding period, it is a pleasure to record that Peter Featherstone still survives, and is spending an active Supernumaryship in Burslem. He preached at Duffield in the Centenary year. John Simon was the father of the Rev. J. S. Simon, Governor of Didsbury College. Joseph B. Blanch was greatly beloved, and on his return to the Circuit, as Supernumary, received a hearty welcome. Henry Needle, who “to beg was not ashamed”—rested not until he had removed burdens of debt from the various Trusts. John Ward was the historian of this as of several other Circuits, and his MSS. is invaluable. He had sources of information which cannot now be traced. Joseph S. Exell, M.A., who afterwards entered the Anglican Church, and is well known as Editor of the Biblical Illustrator. Joseph Midgley, who completed his 50th year in the Ministry whilst stationed here. It was at the first Quarterly Meeting attended by the writer, held at Woodhouse, that Mr. Midgley stated he completed his 200th Quarterly Meeting, having never been hindered by sickness or any other cause. Several entered the Ministry, including Alfred Beresford, who retired to Duffield in the eventide of life. William Calladine, a powerful preacher; his brother George who was accepted, but died before entering the work, was a most promising student. Alfred Kent, and

the last, Henry Wostenholme. Edwin Orme and George Haywood became Ministers in the U.M.F.C., and Robert Kent in the Anglican Church. Of the Local Preachers perhaps John Holbrook was the most remarkable (see *Methodist Magazine*, 1864). Robert Weston was on the Plan 60 years. John Gough was a preacher for 40 years. His first sermon was preached in the Court Room, from "Escape for thy life." S. Calladine, now Senior on the Plan, is the survivor of an honoured family of Preachers.

In 1878, the Connexion by its Thanksgiving Fund raised £297,518 3s. 4d., to which Belper contributed £339 13s. 2d.

The last alteration in the Circuit was the addition of Street Lane and Denby Bottles Societies. Behind that addition there is a remarkable chapter of Methodist history. On the removal of Messrs. Bourne's Potteries from Belper to Denby the hamlet of Street Lane came into existence. Here Mr. Joseph Bourne built a chapel, which was opened in 1841 by Dr. Beaumont. Enlarged and finally re-built, it is now one of the most beautiful village chapels in the district, capable of seating 300, and well attended. In 1862, Mr. J. H. Bourne, desiring the services of a settled pastor, invited the Rev. Nathan Rouse—formerly a Wesleyan minister—to take charge, and built for him a Manse. Another chapel of equal size was at Denby, and two smaller chapels, and one or two preaching rooms, comprised a "circuit within a circuit," worked on Methodist lines, with its regular Quarterly Meetings and Plan. Two of the chapels used the Wesleyan Hymn Book, and contributed to Wesleyan Foreign Missions; the other two in the same degree were Free Methodists. This good and holy man made a mark on the whole neighbourhood in his twenty-one years' labour which will last another generation at least. On his death Mrs. Bourne—the survivor of the family—called to the pastorate several Supernumary Wesleyan ministers, until, at her death in 1898, Denby Chapel was bequeathed to the Methodist Free Church, and Street Lane, with its Manse, to the Wesleyan Church.

Of the Circuit Stewards very scanty record remains. It is not possible to give even a complete list of names and dates. The earliest official reference is to Messrs. Wm. Bourne and

John Goodwin in 1830. Then follow in order (incomplete) Messrs.

J. Longden,	Jas. Beresford, Sen.,	W. B. Meddings,
J. C. Topham,	R. Motte,	Ed. Watson,
J. W. Nuttall,	T. T. Wostenholme,	S. Calladine,
R. Booth,	J. Gough,	J. Medley,
J. Bourne, Sen.,	J. Ball,	S. Barber,
W. W. Bailey,	J. Bardill,	C. Greenwood,
A. Bell,	J. Middleton,	T. Peat.
	Jas. Beresford, Jun.,	



MR. C. GREENWOOD.



MR. T. PEAT.

The Circuit Stewards.

Many of the earlier Stewards are referred to in other parts of this History. Of recent Senior Stewards, the late Mr. Edwin Watson served two terms of office. His mother was contemporary with the very earliest leaders of Methodism in the Circuit, and was herself a pioneer in Sunday School work. Mr. Watson in later life had a rich store of Methodist reminiscences, and a wonderful command of the old "repeating" tunes. Mr. James Beresford, Jun., also served two terms, and was highly esteemed both by the Ministers and in the District Synod. Mr. J. Medley also served the Circuit well, and under his wise and calm rule the finances began that improvement which is now so satisfactory to the Quarterly Meeting.

Until 1870, the Superintendent Minister lived in the Chapel House, adjoining the Belper Chapel. Then a house opposite

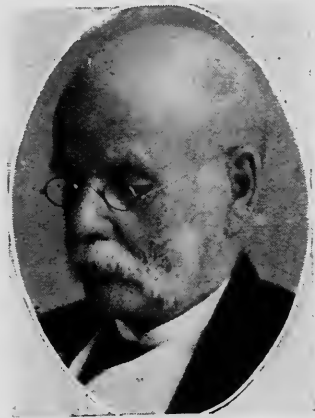


THE CHAPEL HOUSE, BELPER.

was rented. In 1879, the present Manse, No. 2, Park Villas, New Road, was purchased for the Circuit.



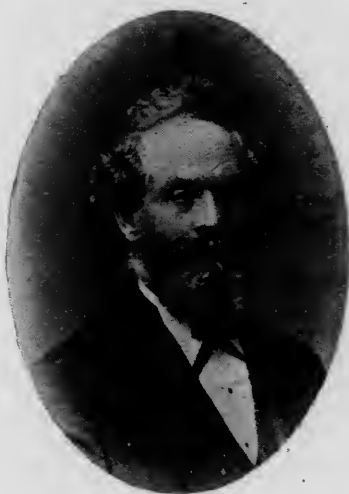
MR. W. A. COWDY,
Circuit Secretary.



MR. W. P. ADSHEAD,
Treasurer, T.C.F.

Sunday School work in the Circuit dates from 1791, and has always been prosperous and prominent. In 1835, a Sunday School Union was formed—one of the earliest in the Connexion—and it is still doing good work. Belper has in view the enlargement of its School premises. Duffield is building a Schoolroom in connection with its new Chapel, and Woodhouse and Bottles both are working for new Schools.

In 1899, the Wesleyan Methodist Church opened its 20th Century Fund of One Million Guineas, towards which the Belper Circuit contributed £319 1s. 6d., besides Collections. Towards this amount Belper School contributed upwards of 50 Guineas.



THE LATE MR. E. WATSON,

MR. JAS. BERESFORD,
Ex-Circuit Stewards.

MR. J. MEDLEY,

The Circuit Centenary Celebrations were held in 1903. On April 5th, the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse, of London, preached at Belper to crowded congregations, and lectured the following day. On Good Friday, United Sunday Scholars services were held at Kilburne, preacher the Rev. J. H. Doddrell, and an outline of the Circuit History "One hundred years in twenty minutes" was given by G. A. Fletcher. The series of services were fittingly concluded on April 19th, with Sermons at Belper by the Rev. J. Robinson Gregory, grandson of the Rev. B. Gregory.

... 1903. ...

Circuit Ministers : Rev. Wm. Sharpley, *Belper* ; Rev. E. H. Scott, *Street Lane*.

Circuit Stewards : Mr. C. Greenwood, *Belper* ; Mr. T. Peat, *Kilburn*.

Secretary of Quarterly Meeting : Mr. C. Cowdy, *Belper*.

Representative to District Synod : Mr. G. A. Fletcher, *Milford*.

Membership, 351. S.S. Scholars, 1,388. Teachers, 153.

**MINISTERS WHO HAVE TRAVELLED IN THE
BELPER CIRCUIT from its formation, with
the Membership for each year.**

		No. of Members
1803	William McAllum, William France ...	...
1804	John Drake, John Aslin ...	500
1805	Thomas Pinder, John Walton ...	590
1806	Thomas Pinder, William Dixon ...	660
1807	Samuel Gates, Marshall Claxton, William Salt (Missionary) ...	650
1808	Richard Wintle, John Hudson, John Bustard, James Everett (Missionary) ...	760
1809	Richard Wintle, Cuthbert Whiteside, Jno. Wright, Geo. Wilson (Missionary) ...	980
1810	John Beaumont, Wm. Harrison, Sen., William Stones ...	900

Cromford Circnit formed 1811.

1811	John Beaumont, Thomas Skelton, Isaac Keeling...	1090
1812	Thomas Tattershall, Joseph Mattison ...	700
1813	Thomas Tattershall, Thomas Eastwood ...	700
1814	Richard Pattison, Hugh Beech ...	668
1815	Richard Pattison, Hugh Beech ...	850
1816	Richard Pattison, Archibald M'Laughlin ...	1200
1817	Joseph Taylor, Sen., Donald Frazer ...	1200
1818	Joseph Taylor, Sen., Donald Frazer ...	1200
1819	John Doncaster, Robert Morton ...	1090
1820	Joseph Meek, John Smith ...	1016
1821	Joseph Meek, John Smith ...	1030
1822	Thomas Garbutt, Thomas Newton ...	1010

		No. of Members
1823	Thomas Garbutt, Thomas Newton ...	1015
1824	Thomas Pinder, Richard Allen ...	1015
1825	Thomas Pinder, William Constable ...	1040
1826	Richard Wintle, William Constable ...	1048
1827	Richard Wintle, William Constable ...	1060
1828	William Coultas, Joseph Armstrong ...	1180
1829	William Coultas, Joseph Armstrong ...	1200
1830	Robert Wheeler, Ralph Gibson ...	1190
1831	Robert Wheeler, Ralph Gibson ...	1060
1832	William Fowler, Samuel Ward ...	1027
1833	William Fowler, Daniel S. Tatham ...	1080
1834	James Brooke, Daniel S. Tatham ...	1268
1835	James Brooke, William Elton ...	1200
1836	James Brooke, William Elton, Thomas Standring	1280
1837	Thos. Edwards (1), William Elton, William B. Thorneloe ...	1378
1838	Thos. Edwards, Sen., John Smedley, John G. Cox	1440
1839	Thos. Edwards, Sen., John Smedley, John G. Cox	1635
1840	Josiah Goodwin, John Smedley, William Fidler, Samuel Brocksop ...	1820
1841	Josiah Goodwin, William Fidler, Samuel Brocksop, Henry Kirkland ...	1704
1842	Josiah Goodwin, Thomas Powell, Thomas Kilner, Henry Kirkland ...	1652
1843	Thomas Powell, Thos. Eckersley, Thomas Kilner	1606
1844	John Shipman, Thos. Eckersley, Richard Sargeant	1705
1845	John Shipman, John Gregory, Richard Sargeant	1493
1846	Samuel Fiddian, John Gregory, Richard Sargeant	1464

Ripley Circuit formed 1847.

1847-8	Samuel Fiddian, Henry Hine ...	1554, 883
1849	George Birley, Henry Hine ...	919
1850	George Birley, George Hagen ...	705
1851-3	Thomas Shaw, Peter Featherstone ...	360, 387, 414
1854-5	John Simon, George Smith (2) ...	395, 399
1856-8	John Raby, Joseph Portrey ...	401, 422, 422
1859	Thomas Armson, William R. Jones ...	404
1860	Thomas Armson, Samuel Sheard ...	410
1861	Thomas Armson, Joseph B. Blanch ...	380
1862	James Scholes, Joseph B. Blanch ...	386
1863	James Scholes, James Cooke (3) ...	453
1864	James Scholes, James Cooke (c) ...	416
1865	Samuel S. Taylor, Thomas Horton ...	370

		No. of Members
1866	William Sinclair, Thomas Horton ...	... 342
1867	William Sinclair, Ulric H. Allen ...	... 308
1868	Henry Needle, Ulric H. Allen ...	... 321
1869	Henry Needle, William Calvert ...	... 340
1870	Robert W. Pordige, William Calvert ...	... 408
1871-2	Nathaniel Stevens, William A. Templar	418, 379
1873	Thomas Rigby, William A. Templar ...	... 378
1874	John Ward, Joseph S. Exell ...	... 370
1875-6	John Ward, John W. Denham ...	370, 350
1877	John Bonham, John W. Denham ...	... 366
1878-9	John Bonham, Walter W. Ward ...	406, 367
1880-1	Martin Jubb, William Cowdell ...	362, 343
1882-3	Alexander Puddicombe, George H. Hayes	346, 350
1884	Alexander Puddicombe, John Oswald ...	... 360
1885-6	Joseph Midgley, William Wakinshaw ...	347, 349
1887	Joseph Midgley, John H. Doddrell ...	... 350
1888	Frederick C. Dugdale, John H. Doddrell	... 331
1889	Robert J. Thomas, John H. Doddrell ...	... 298
1890	Robert J. Thomas, Isaac Newton ...	... 295
1891	Robert J. Thomas, Robert Plowright ...	... 255
1892-3	Edward A. Wain, Robert Plowright ...	301, 302
1894	Edward A. Wain, Joseph Ogden ...	... 301
1895	William D. Johnson, William Salisbury	... 312
1896	William D. Johnson, John W. Marsden	... 280
1897	William D. Johnson, John W. Marsden	... 280
1898	Robert Nicholson, John W. Marsden ...	... 290
1899	Robert Nicholson, Walter Platt ...	... 302
1900	Arthur B. Holford, Walter Platt ...	... 340
1901	Arthur B. Holford, Edward H. Scott ...	... 339
1902	Arthur B. Holford, Edward H. Scott ...	... 339
1903	Wm. Sharpley, Edward H. Scott ...	... 320

.....

SUPERNUMARY MINISTERS,
and the years they resided within the Circuit.

B. Gregory, Sen.	...	1829—48.
S. Ward	...	1833.
T. Newton	...	1836—8.
J. B. Blanch	...	1890—2.
A. Beresford	...	1891—9.
F. Ewer	...	1893—4.
H. Burson	...	1896—8.

LOCAL PREACHERS,

with the dates when they came on Full Plan.

- | | | | |
|------|------------------------------|------|----------------------------|
| 1770 | Slater, Thos., Shottle | 1819 | Smith, J., Belper |
| 1777 | Taylor, Joseph, Duffield | | Slater, John, Shottle |
| 1798 | Street, Edward, Belper | | Taylor, W., Ambergate |
| | Palmer, Wm., „ | | Alcock. W. |
| | Moore, Francis. „ | | Webb, S., Riddings |
| | Gregory, Benjamin „ | | Shipley, J. |
| | Ludlam, Philip, S. Wingfield | | Bakewell, J. |
| | Wain, Wm., Alfreton | | Ottewell, T. |
| | Spicer, Thos., Lea | 1824 | Topham, J. J., Belper |
| 1810 | Oliver, J. | | Bourne, Wm., Jun., Belper |
| | Crooks, J., Woodhouse | 1837 | Calladine, Geo., Woodhouse |
| | Hill, S. | | Allcock, Samuel, Belper |
| | Watts, D. | | Froggatt, S., Belper |
| | Andrews, W. | | Parker, S., Horsley |
| | Ludlam. W. | | Mather, Joshua, Heanor |
| | Ludlam, Peter | | Taylor, T., Alfreton |
| | Lowe, G. | | Winson, H., Belper |
| | Crooks, W. | | Barsley, J., Shirland |
| | Adams, W. | | Fryer, J., Swanwick |
| | Brown, T., Alfreton | | Nuttall, J. W., Belper |
| | Pidcock, B. | | Palmer, Jos., Belper |
| 1813 | Moreton, R., Duffield | | Crooks, S., Alfreton |
| 1816 | Jones, Elliott, Belper | | Street, C., Heage |
| 1817 | Reynolds, Quintin, Belper | | Beardsley, J., Shottle |
| | Smedley, John, „ | | Crooks, J., Woodhouse |
| 1819 | Moreton, J., Duffield | | Rhodes, G., Shirland |
| | Sanders, T., Belper | | Slack, T., Ripley |
| | College, Wm. | | Parkins, J., Kilburn |
| | Argyle, T., Kilburn | | Hill, W., Alfreton |
| | Dexter, J. | | Weston. R., Woodhouse |
| | Wass, J. | | Penny, W., Ripley |
| | Heapey, I., Belper | | Norman, D. „ |
| | Crookes, F. | | Housley, J., Swanwick |
| | Hill, R. | | Simmons, J., Belper |
| | Allen, W. | | Walker, J. „ |
| | Hardy, Wm., Ripley | | Topham, J. „ |

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|------|------------------------------|------|----------------------------------|
| 1837 | Woollands, T., Woodhouse | 1853 | Renwick, Duffield |
| | Gething, W., Pinxton | | Bardill, E., Belper |
| | Fanshaw, J., Buckland Hollow | 1854 | Ball, Belper |
| 1840 | Bark, H., Swanwick | | Calladine, Wm., Woodhouse |
| | Webster, J., Buckland Hollow | | Bass, Belper |
| | Parkin, B., Ripley | | Morriss, Kilburn |
| | Stocks, J., Pinxton | 1855 | Gamble, Belper |
| | Maltby, T., Duffield | | Hardy, Belper |
| | Weston, S., Woodhouse | | Calladine. Geo., Jun., Woodhouse |
| | Nelson, W. T., Belper | 1856 | Gough, John, Belper |
| | Wood, J., Riddings | | Mee, Kilburn |
| | Wheatcroft, W., Alfreton | 1858 | Adshead, W. P., Belper |
| | Evans, H., Milford | | Beresford, Joseph ,, |
| | Cowley, Jesse, Denby | | Hall, Milford |
| | Russell, G. ,, | 1859 | Hanley, Milford |
| | Gamble, T., Alfreton | 1863 | *Calladine, S., Woodhouse |
| 1844 | Smith, Gervase, Heanor | | Weston, J. ,, |
| | Holbrook. John, Milford | | Barton, H., Duffield |
| | Kirk, John, Belper | | Hadfield, Isaac, Belper |
| | Ward, J., Denby | | Caunt, John, Belper |
| | Rowland, Geo., Belper | 1864 | Motte, Belper |
| | Holden, Robert. Woodhouse | 1865 | Fitchett, Burley |
| | Alton, Geo., Ripley | | Manssuer. Belper |
| | Summersides, T.. Ambergate | 1866 | Ball, E., Duffield |
| | Wheatcroft, D., Belper | | *Carding, John, Kilburn |
| | White, J., Swanwick | | Winfield, Kilburn |
| | Moore, J., Ripley | 1868 | Norman, Henry, Belper |
| | Orme, Edwin, Belper | 1869 | Ball. C., Belper |
| 1849 | Marshall, Denby | | Jackson, W., Belper |
| | Smith, A. ,, | | Parkin, Belper |
| | Haywood, G., Belper | | Hogg, J. M., Belper |
| | Kent, John, ,, | | Tomlinson, W., Duffield |
| | Chadwick, John, Milford | | Barber, W., Duffield |
| | Smith, W., Belper | 1871 | Hogg, F., Belper |
| | Ball, Duffield | | Hewson, R. ,, |
| | Wass, Belper | | Allsop, J., Milford |
| 1850 | Beresford. A., Belper | | Sellers, R. ,, |
| | Beresford, J. ,, | 1873 | Harrison, A., Belper |
| 1851 | Hardy, Belper | 1874 | Meddings, W. B., Belper |

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|------|-----------------------------|------|--------------------------|
| 1877 | Fisher, G., Woodhouse | 1888 | Shenton, H. F., Belper |
| | Morton, W., Belper | | Ball, James. Belper |
| | Love, G., Woodhouse | 1889 | Potter, W. H. „ |
| | Pepper, G., Belper | | Cowley, W. G. „ |
| | Davis, Henry, Pottery | | Kirkman, G., Ambergate |
| | Wostenholme, Henry, Belper | 1890 | Corbyn, H., Belper |
| | Banks, H. W., Heage | 1891 | *Fletcher, G. A. „ |
| | Jackson, W., Pottery | | Gibson, J. F. W. „ |
| 1878 | Hogg, J. R., Belper | | Geeson, T. „ |
| 1880 | Mansfield, H., Milford | 1892 | *Briggs, J., Duffield |
| | Barker, B., Belper | | Higginbottom, J., Belper |
| | Davis, Henry, Street Lane | | *Brown, Jos., Belper |
| 1881 | Wright, W. J., Belper | | Hobday, E. „ |
| 1882 | Yeomans, T., Hazelwood | | Cottam, R. H., Milford |
| | Parkin, F., Kilburn | 1893 | Mellor, W., Kilburn |
| 1883 | Wansbrough, A. B., Duffield | 1895 | Norman, E. H. D., Belper |
| | Bladen, T., Kilburn | | Birkett, H., Belper |
| | *Shaw, Walter, Kilburn | 1896 | Bucknall, W. „ |
| | Higgs, J., Belper | | *Cotton, C, Shottle |
| 1886 | Trowbridge, J. T., Kilburn | | *Sutton, H. „ |
| | Spencer, R., Belper | | Shaw, Wm., Kilburn |
| | *Peat, T., Kilburn | 1897 | *Hebb, S., Woodhouse |
| | Dixon, R., Ambergate | 1898 | Perkins, F. H., Belper |
| | Hackman, G. „ | 1899 | Wassell, A., Denby |
| | Ball, E., Duffield | 1900 | *Brown, J., Ambergate |
| 1887 | Oldknow, T., Woodhouse | 1901 | *Woolley, A., Kilburn |
| | Brown, M., Ambergate | 1902 | *Woolley, H. „ |
| 1888 | Weston, J. W., Kilburn | 1903 | *Dunster, T., Belper |

NOTE.—Above List is incomplete owing to Circuit Plans not being available. For the same reason some names do not appear as early as they otherwise would. Names on Trial are omitted.

*These are on the Plan for 1903.



The Separate Societies.

BELPER.

THE Rev. John Ward in his "Belper Methodism" (1876), from a variety of facts and traditions, fixes the year 1770 as the probable date of the introduction of Methodism into Belper. About this time the advent of the Strutts and the building of the first of their Mills, rapidly converted a straggling hamlet into the second town in the County. Thomas Slater of Shottle was an active agent in originating the Methodist Society in the town. The Market Place being the chief resort, service was regularly held there, and also in a cottage in Chapel Street, and a butcher's shop in Wellington Court.

At that time there was no place of worship in the town except the Old Chapel-of-Ease on the Butts, and a small room in Green Lane, now the Unitarian Schoolroom, which had been used by various Nonconformists from 1721.

In 1781 the Society deemed it necessary to erect a Chapel. The site—given by Mr. Slater—is now used as a garden adjoining the Chapel House. No drawing of it is known to exist, but we are told it was a small plain stone structure. An old memorandum book belonging to Thomas Slater is headed "Cash paid and cash received on acct. of the Preaching-house at Belper." The principal sums paid were to Obadiah Wigley, joiner; Thomas Pedley for bricks and lime; and Abram Harrison for nails—the total being £135 18s. 11d. Among the Subscriptions are Mr. Ward £2 2s., Mr. Statham £3 3s., Thos. Gillott £3 3s., Mr. Thos. Lancton (Kilburn) 5/-, Saml. Robinson

10/-, Thos. Smith £1 1s., Mr. Wm. Bourne £15, Mr. Lichfield £2 2s., Abram Harrison (Town) £1, Joseph Eley 5/-. There are several considerable sums entered as collected by Mr. Slater. What debt remained we can only conjecture from the item of £5 per annum paid to Hannah Smith for "intrist."

The property was secured to the Methodist Connexion and conveyed in trust to Thos. Slater, farmer, Shottle; Jas. Chritie, framework knitter, Belper; Wm. Bourne, potter, Belper; Danl. Street, Jun., framework knitter, Belper; John Jillett, farmer, Belper; Joseph Statham, framework knitter, Belper; John Rice,



THE CHAPEL—EXTERIOR.

malster, Kilburn; Thos. Pedley, malster, Belper; Saml. Robinson, shop-keeper, Belper. Witnesses to Signatures—John Ward, Saml. Hick, Anthony Street. The Chapel was finished in 1782. Tradition says John Wesley preached on behalf of the Chapel before it was finished. The late Mrs. John Smedley told the writer that it was a common saying in her father's early life that "the Old Chapel was opened before it was closed" *i.e.*, before the roof was put on. Of this visit Wesley in his Journal makes no mention; but as he was at Derby on Thursday, July 4th, of that year, and the following Sunday he

says, "I preached at Birmingham," it is just possible this was Belper's opportunity. Many now living have heard Mrs. John Goodwin, of Hazelwood (the daughter of Thomas Slater), relate how as a girl of twelve she heard John Wesley preach in Belper Market Place, and at the close of the service a procession was formed to the site of the new chapel; Wesley linking arms with Mr. Slater, and taking "Polly" by the hand. His one recorded visit here was on July 5th, 1786.



THE CHAPEL—INTERIOR.

The chapel remained in use twenty-five years, during which time it was the spiritual birthplace of many, for the Society increased from 51 in 1791 to 216 in 1805, when it was found necessary to secure the adjoining land and build a larger chapel. This was opened on June 28th, 1807, and externally with but few alterations it remains the same. Built to seat 1,400, it was the wonder of the country for many miles round. Originally the bottom of the chapel was unpewed, the congregation occupying the gallery, and the Sunday School the area below.

For many years a heavy debt remained on the property, at one time reaching nearly £2,000, but this was largely reduced under the vigorous Superintendency of the Rev. Hy. Needle.

In 1873 the chapel was modernised, the whole of the body being pewed, a new organ erected, and a porch built, at a total outlay of £850.

Of the Society—the earliest record is in 1791, when the Leaders were Edward Street, Richard Jackson and Thos. Slater, with 51 members—almost every name being a reminder of prominent Methodists of generations later. In a memoir of Rev. Wm. McAllum (Magazine 1810), there is an interesting reference to the Belper Society in 1797. “Whilst concluding the year at *Belpar* there was a shaking amongst the dry bones, and before three o’clock on New Year’s Morn, twenty souls were brought into Christian liberty, and from that time the work has been prospering.”

In 1799 Belper had the largest membership — 164—in the Derby Circuit. In 1803 the numbers were 176. In 1805 there were 12 Classes with 216 members. The Leaders were Rev. F. Drake, Joseph Pymm, Wm. Palmer, Thos. Adams, Jos. Peak, Francis Moore, Jos. Evans, Wm. Burrows, Thos. Slater, John Froggett, Joshua Nansel and Robert Jackson. Several such lists of both Leaders and Members are preserved, extending well into the Century. Belper Methodism is rich in the names and memories of many good men and women at this time. In a letter to Mr. Slater from Rev. Geo. Sargeant, who had travelled in the Circuit, we catch a glimpse of the affection between pastor and people. “January 20th, 1800. I hope you see the work of God deepening and widening amongst you at Belper, the Class-leaders loving and faithful, and the Classes lively and well attended. Please to give my love to all the Leaders.....Also to all the poor of the Society and to the singers.”

Belper Society has been blessed with many seasons of Revival—one of the most extraordinary being in 1815—16. Mr. Elliott Jones, Messrs. Bournes’ book-keeper, was the means under God of continuing the good work referred to in the Circuit Chronicles. In 1816 he entered into possession of “Perfect Love”—of which doctrine many in Belper were then powerful exponents. Relating his experience of this blessing at the next Band meeting, seven or eight were made partakers of this great salvation. Next day an invitation was circulated to attend in

the evening for the purpose of prayer. The place was crowded to excess—and the meeting continued till midnight—numbers found peace with God, and not a few the blessing of “Perfect Love.” Every evening for nearly a year the meetings were continued, and many hundreds were either converted or sanctified by the power of the Lord Jesus. Of Mr. Jones’ share in this work, Rev. D. Fraser wrote to Dr. Bunting—“Belper, 11th March, 1818.....At the meetings which were held till twelve o’clock at night and sometimes till one in the morning, Brother Jones...has attended five or six nights in the week, and been five hours together upon his knees...” The life of this remarkable man was published in 1823, and is still a treasured possession in the neighbourhood.



MR. S. HARRISON.

MRS. STEVENS.

In 1819 the Leaders were Wm. Palmer, R. Smedley, John Barnes, Jas. Holmes, I. Heapey, Benjamin Beresford, F. Hill, John Smith, Josh. Watson, F. Moore, C. Webster, T. Herrod, S. Kirk, G. Adams, James and Sarah Sims, Jos. Slack, W. Hodgkinson, C. and J. Mather, John Reynolds and W. Osbiston.

From this date until 1850, Belper was in a state of high evangelistic fervour. There was a network of cottage prayer meetings in all parts of the town. One was held in Rev. B. Gregory’s cottage on the “Common Side”—crowded and earnest. Besides week-night service in Belper and Pottery Chapels, there was preaching at Farmer S. Harrisons, The

Laund ; at Mr. Reeds, Bridge Foot ; and at Cow Hill. There was also a regular system of Sunday evening prayer meetings and a well served Prayer-leaders' Plan.

Among well remembered names of this period are Thos. and Saml. Sanders, Thos. Jennison, Jos. Walker, Ed. Street, Thos. Horton, Wm. Annable, Chas. Simpkinson, Robert and John Moore, H. Winson, J. Slack, R. Whittaker and John Rosewarne. A large proportion of the principal tradesmen were Methodists. Of these the most notable was Mr. John C. Topham, who commenced business as a draper in Belper in 1819.

Amongst the best families in Belper were those of Mr. Samuel Harrison with his daughters Mrs. Stevens and Mrs. C. Palmer, and the Brothers Lichfield with the three Misses Lichfield. Mrs. Stevens was an earnest correspondent on Entire Sanctification. Miss Lichfield was afterwards well known as Mrs. J. Robinson of Belper and Manchester. Another sister Mrs. John Smedley, who recently died, the oldest member of Society in Belper.

Mr. John Longdon was a very active and devoted Christian, a thorough Methodist, and highly esteemed as Leader and Office Bearer.

Mr. Wm. Webster, Sen., was one of a famous Methodist family. His conversion and its results were remarkable. Rev. Hugh Beech was asked to baptize his child. Not having a Form of Service at hand, he gave a short and earnest address which so affected both the parents as to lead to their conversion. They became greatly concerned for their parents. Fearing to speak to them of spiritual things, the father wrote a letter telling of what the Lord had done for their souls. This was read aloud by a younger brother, during which all three were awakened and led to seek the same blessing.

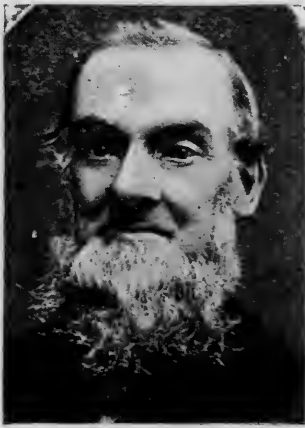
Mr. Wm. Webster, Jun., was an eminently good man who distinguished himself in the Sabbath School by his devoted labours, which are recorded on a tablet placed there in 1843.

Mr. Benjamin Beresford was a thorough hearted Christian, a man mighty in prayer and greatly esteemed. It was the custom for a kindred spirit—"Charley" Mather, to call for him every Sunday morning to go to the early Class Meeting. To his surprise one morning the shutters were still closed ; after knocking, he cried aloud "Arise ! shine ! for thy light is come,

and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." But the old saint had heard an earlier call, and at that moment lay dead in his bed. At his funeral the Vicar allowed Mr. Mather to give an address in the Old Chapel Yard which he closed by saying "So let me live, so let me die, like Benjamin Beresford"—and a great congregation said "Amen." The Rev. B. Gregory thought it a great honour to occupy the cottage consecrated by the prayers of so holy a man.

Charles Mather, witty and eccentric, was a working man who had been converted from reckless drunkenness to intense devotion under the preaching of Mrs. Pattison.

John Roper was a plain zealous man, earnest in prayer. He always spoke first at the Love Feast, generally setting the meeting in a blaze by giving out "Refining fire, go thro' my heart."



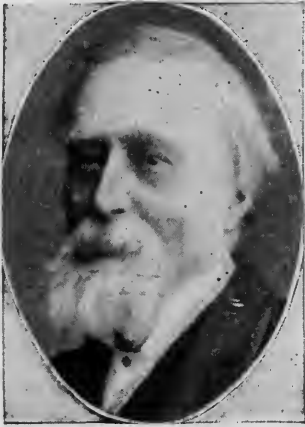
MR. J. GOUGH.



MRS. SANDERS.

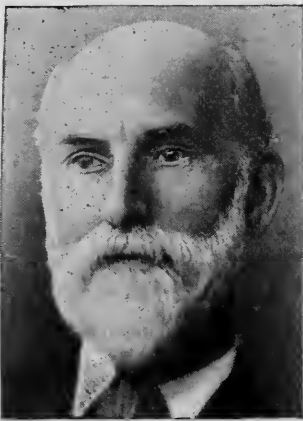
Two very marked members of the Society were Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Sanders. The former having seen much military service, on his retirement obtained the mastership of the newly opened Infants' School. His wife assisted him. She lived, joyous and active until her 94th year, one of the best known figures in the town.

Leaders at a later date were Jas. Beresford, Sen., Mrs. Stevens, J. Robinson, T. Wostenholme, J. Gough, W. B. Meddings and Mrs. Sanders. The most prominent figure in recent



MR. T. T. WOSTENHOLME. REV. HY. WOSTENHOLME.

years was that of James Robinson. As Chapel Steward—no books can record his expenditure of time and money on the great renovation of 1873. And again on behalf of the Minister's house he raised £100 from a penny—by selling small wares from door to door and re-investing the proceeds. His colleague was T. T. Wostenholme: together they raised £70 out of a tea. Mr. Wostenholme survived until 1903. The oldest official, he ever



MR. F. L. ROBINSON.

MR. T. STILLMAN.

had a young heart to enter enthusiastically into every forward movement. His advice in Church matters was broad and wise, and his faithfulness as a Class Leader was blessed to many who were privileged to meet with him.

In Public Worship Music has always had a prominent place. Belper Chapel was celebrated in the twenties for its devout, correct, and vigorous singing, and as far back as 1800 a former minister writes : "Give my love.....to the singers ; I have heard no such singing since I left you." The pulpit was then high up against the west wall—at its foot an unusually large "singing pew" filled with an efficient choir and band.



MR. C. BALL.



MR. J. ROBINSON.

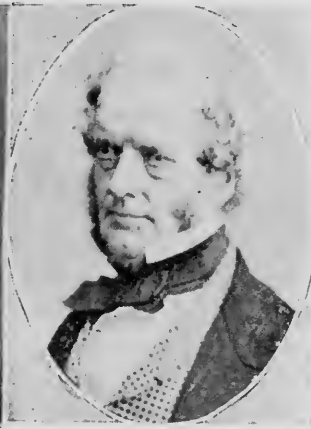


MR. J. M. HOGG.

About 1844 an organ chamber was built, and the first organ was erected under the direction of Thos. Mawkes, the celebrated musician, a native of Belper.

One of the earliest Organists was Miss Hall, of the Old Manor Farm, succeeded by John Malin and W. J. Pratt. The last appointment was that of J. B. Gough in 1878, under whose devotion the Musical Services have reached an excellence unequalled in the District.

The Sunday School is the oldest in Belper. In 1791 Wm. Palmer, who had just settled in the town, saw in a box in the old chapel a number of Bibles and Testaments. On enquiry he found they had belonged to a Sunday School, which had been started some time before and failed. He resolved at once

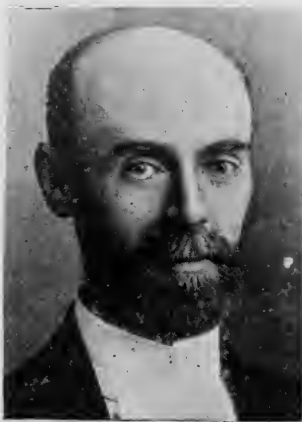


MR. J. BALL.

MR. J. C. TOPHAM.

MR. JOS. BERESFORD.

to start again, and with the blessing of God he succeeded, and the School without a break has continued till now. Mr. Palmer retained the Superintendency until his death in 1835. Mr. J. C. Topham succeeded him and held the post 30 years—until his death—no mean record for two consecutive lives. In 1841 the new School Room was built and opened amid great rejoicing—Mr. Topham leading a procession out of the Chapel, and Mr. W. Webster, a model Secretary, giving out the first hymn.



MR. J. B. GOUGH.

MR. G. A. FLETCHER.

The present Superintendents.

Prior to this the school was held in the body of the Chapel. Forms were provided for the scholars (who at one time numbered nearly 700), and half-a-dozen peculiar high chairs for the conductors and teachers, from which they had oversight of the children. Later on two of these chairs were used by the stewards when examining the class-tickets before admitting the members to the Sacrament and lovefeasts. One of them—now reversed and used as a reading-desk—still survives, the only relic of those far off days.

Mr. Joseph Beresford is now the oldest Scholar and Teacher. From the earliest times, for more than 50 years the School was partly maintained by subscription. The names of all the subscribers are before us. They include Mr. G. B. Strutt (the largest donor), and Mr. Ward, hosier, who was Treasurer for many years. He was succeeded by Mr. S. Whittaker, who in 1825 gave £20 to be held in trust, the interest to go to the School. A flourishing day school was held here, in which many of the older residents in the town received a sound education.

The Sunday School Superintendents have included Messrs. W. Palmer, J. C. Topham, J. Palmer, C. Ball, J. Beresford, Sen., J. Caunt, J. Smedley, T. Wostenholme, J. M. Hogg, W. J. Wright, J. Riley, Jas. Beresford, Jun., J. Ball, T. Stillman, C. Greenwood, W. H. Potter, E. Hobday, G. Slater, J. Higgin-



MR. G. PAULSON,
S.S. Secretary.



MR. G. SLATER,
S.S. Treasurer.



MR. E. SMITH,
Guild Secretary.

bottom, G. A. Fletcher and J. B. Gough. Mr. Hogg was universally beloved, and Mr. Ball—called home in the midst of his work—was lovingly commemorated in the Renovation of the Schoolroom.

The oldest institution at Belper is the Sick and Funeral Society, founded in 1837. The Wesley Guild, which succeeded a long established Mutual Improvement Society, is doing vigorous work.

... 1903. ...

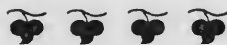
Members, 116. Scholars, 212. Teachers, 27.
Bible Class, 30. Band of Hope, 167.

Leaders : Mrs. Sharpley, Misses Wostenholme, Gndber and Medley. Messrs. Wheatley, Hewitt and Cowdy.

Stewards : Messrs. T. Stillman, W. A. Cowdy, W. E. Smith, T. Freear, F. L. Robinson.

Sunday School Officers : Messrs. G. A. Fletcher, J. B. Gough, S. Wheatley, G. Paulson, G. Holmes, G. Slater.

Organist and Choirmaster : Mr. J. B. Gough.



SHOTTLE.

As early as 1767, Thomas Slater opened his house to the first race of Methodist Preachers, and Shottle was regularly visited in the Derbyshire Round. Himself a great lover of the Class Meeting, it is probable Mr. Slater became a Leader of the first Society in the Circuit. Services were held in the Farm Kitchen for nearly 50 years, and many celebrated men delivered their message here.

In 1816, John Slater, the son, built a goodly Chapel in the garden attached to the Farm—but this not until the old man had held several prayer meetings on the ground “to know the Lord’s will.” John, himself a noted Local Preacher, was the founder of the Shottle Sunday School. His house was the place where some of the most famous Local Preachers loved



CHAPEL INTERIOR.

to foregather. The day he died, he gave to Mr. Jos. Palmer two texts which he wished Rev. R. Sargent to preach from the *next day*! which he accordingly did in the adjoining Chapel. With much feeling he pointed to the School Children and exclaimed "God buries His workmen but carries on His work." And the work was carried on by Mr. Heapey who every Sabbath went from Belper, beloved by all; later came Mr. Paulson and others—until about 1875, when trouble having overtaken the Goodwin family then resident at the Farm, the School seemed likely to be closed. Old Mrs. Goodwin appealed to Mr. W. B. Meddings, then living at Chevin Mill to come to their help, but he could not see his way to sever his connection with Belper School (he was then the writer's teacher). But on a certain Sunday morning, two bright little girls of about eight summers, knocked timidly at the door: "We have come to ask Mr. Meddings to teach us, we have been so many Sundays to Shottle and had no teacher." This message was given to Mrs. Meddings, who with characteristic vigour threw wide open the door, exclaiming "Come in—now my lord, you have refused all before, refuse these if you can!" He was ready to start to Belper but turned with the little maids towards Shottle instead.

Becoming tenants of the Farm, the work was carried on by Mr. and Mrs. Meddings for a quarter of a century, and their memory will long remain. Mention must also be made of



MR. AND MRS. W. B. MEDDINGS.

Joseph Key and J. Jennens, Leaders; of the Sunday School work of Mr. Courtney still happily with us, greatly beloved; and Mr. C. Cotton the present Superintendent. It is worthy of



MR. JOHN SLATER,
The first Superintendent.



MR. C. COTTON,
The present Superintendent.

note that in the same old farm house, without a break since 1767 to the present time, Ministers and Local Preachers have been hospitably entertained on their appointments at Snottle.

... 1903. ...

Members, 6. Scholars, 41. Teachers, 6.

Leader, Steward, and Superintendent : Mr. C. Cotton.

Organist : Mr. A. Wigley.

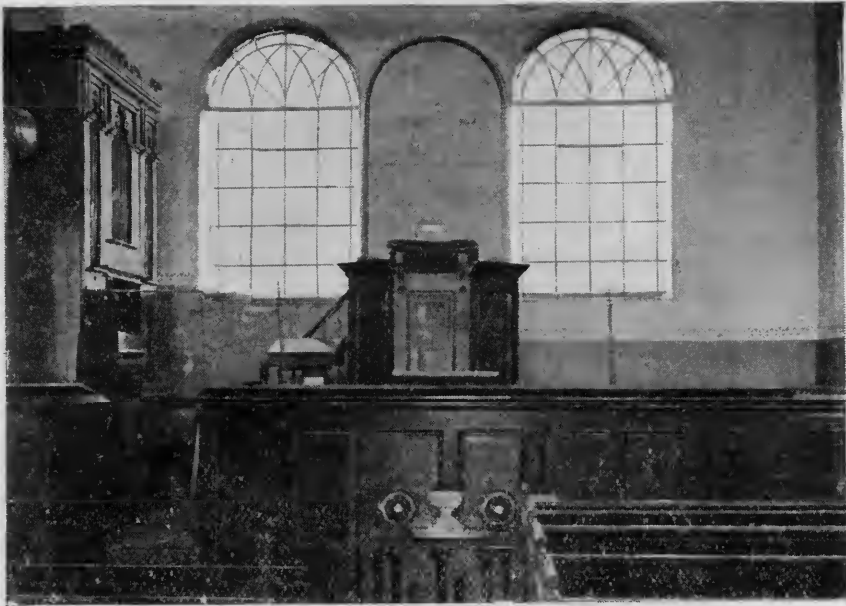


DUFFIELD.

THE oldest Chapel in the Circuit is that of Duffield—probably it was the earliest building for Methodist worship. The Society had been gathered together by Thomas Slater, who in 1770 appears to have made a vigorous effort by open-air preaching to reach the unsaved. His was the first Methodist sermon preached in the village—when he met “with the treatment which might be expected from an ungodly multitude.” His favourite spots were in open yards, so as not to obstruct the thoroughfare. A few can be traced—Holloway’s Yard, where the house now stands opposite the Post Office; Tempest’s Yard opposite the Parish Room: Day’s Yard where the New Street is opened against Mr. Kents: and on Castle Orchard Hill. When winter came he procured a small dwelling house—now pulled down, and here preached some hundreds of sermons. He formed such as were under religious impressions into a Society of which he was the Leader—and although he had to walk three miles each way, he was never known to be hindered by any kind of weather. One of the converts of his street preaching was Joseph Taylor, a Duffield youth, who became Mr. Slater’s companion, and eventually entered the Ministry. John Wesley held him in high esteem, making him a member of the first Legal Hundred. He became President of the Conference in 1802.

In 1791 the Society consisted of seven members—Jonathan Taylor, Leader, Abigail Taylor, Robert Lambert, Hannah Smith, Thomas White, Elizabeth White and Robert Lambert, Junior.

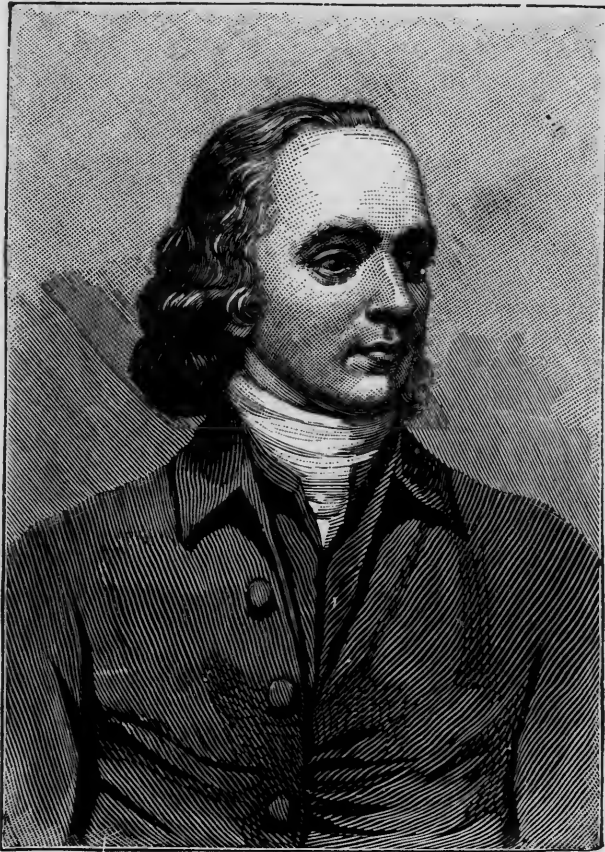
The Chapel was built in 1777, and has passed through several alterations. At one time admittance to the gallery was by an outside stone staircase. Inside, the floor was paved with brick. There was no raised pew for the Band, which in early days was a noted one. Gervase Cooper joined it about 1830,



THE CHAPEL—INTERIOR.

playing "Bass Viol, Double Bass, or Flute" as occasion required. Three years before this he had occasionally started tunes in the Chapel. In 1844 he became Organist, a position he retains in his 92nd year—"The Oldest Organist in Methodism" (see *Methodist Recorder*, June 5th, 1902). Converted in a mighty Circuit Revival, he joined the Society about 1835, and has since occupied every office in School and Church. He is the great-grandson of Thomas Slater. A new Chapel was built in 1843, and Dr. Bunting, then in the height of his popularity and power, preached at the opening services "on

account of his friendship for Rev. Joseph Taylor, Sen." Others who preached in the new Chapel were Dr. Newton, Dr. Beaumont, G. B. Macdonald and John Rattenbury. At this time there was a flourishing Methodist Day School in the village, for which an Annual Sermon was preached. In the eventful '49, Rev. James Everett had been engaged, but before the



REV. JOS. TAYLOR.

The first sent into the Ministry.

time for the fulfilment of his promise, was expelled by the Conference. The service was held in a very large tent behind the Chapel, and an immense Congregation assembled. The Junior Minister — Rev. Henry Hine, was appointed for the same day at Duffield according to Plan, and would not give up his service but preached at the same hour in the Chapel to a Congregation of *two*—the Chapel-keeper and his wife!

Very soon after this the majority of the Trustees decided to throw in their lot with the Reform party, and very sorrowfully a poor handful of members returned to the old Chapel, which had been used as a Schoolroom in the interval, and recommenced services there. Messrs. Cooper and Dawn with W. Stables were the office bearers together for the next 40 years. Now, it is intended to build a new Wesleyan Chapel, worthy of the honourable position Duffield has occupied in the history of Methodism in the Circuit.



MR. G. COOPER.

... 1903. ...

Members, 21. Scholars, 73. Teachers, 6.

Leaders : Messrs. G. Cooper and S. Barber.

Stewards : Messrs. J. Alton, G. Cooper, S. Barber, H. Stables,
and S. Cross.

Organist : Mr. Gervase Cooper.

Sunday School Officers : Messrs. G. Cooper, S. Barber, A.
Cross.

HORSLEY WOODHOUSE.

THE next oldest Chapel is at Woodhouse. In 1791 a Society of ten members existed here. Francis Ball, Leader; Dorothy Ball, Elenr. Brentnall, Edwd. Burgen, Josh. Hubbert, Thos. Langton, Mar. Weston, Christ. Woodhouse, Mary Harper and Willm. Crookes. About this date preaching was held in the house of Mr. John Ball, himself an early Leader. In 1797 the Chapel was built, which served the cause until 1848, when it underwent considerable alteration and enlarge-



THE CHAPEL—EXTERIOR.

ment. Sunday School work was commenced about 1800, the earliest Superintendents being Messrs. Chris. Woodhouse, Thos. Woollands and Saml. Saxton. About 1820 the School was so popular that scholars from all the surrounding Parishes had to wait their turn for admission on vacancies arising. Dr. Gregory describes the young Woodhousians of 1840 as "the most aggressive little ragamuffins I ever saw," but on his last visit in 1879 was much struck with the improvement in the juvenile population.

Joseph Crooks was probably the first Local Preacher in the village, succeeded by a number of useful men who have done good work in their day. Several of these are mentioned under the Circuit heading. Robert Holden who appeared on the Plan of 1844 had a unique experience—highly intelligent and of literary tastes it was assumed he would enter the Ministry. A long illness closed that door, but another opened at the ancient village of Kirkstead in Lincolnshire, where was a venerable Presbyterian cause which had lapsed into Unitarianism. Losing their pastor, the dozen souls forming the congregation, retaining the endowment, cast about for another supply. The leading member heard Mr. Holden preach, assured him



REV. WM. CALLADINE.



MR. S. CALLADINE.

their Trust deeds contained no doctrinal provisions whatever, and offered him the pastorate. This he accepted and for nearly half-a-century preached good old Methodist doctrine in a lively and effective manner.

Robert Weston's name headed the Plan for years, and he lived to a venerable old age. His companion in long preaching journeys was James Courtney (locally "Jim Carter"). On one occasion returning by Coxbench, in the darkness they lost their way in a field. Suddenly an overhanging briar snatched off Jim's cap. "Howd on Robud, while ah find me cap." With difficulty a match was struck, when lo! they stood on the

verge of an unprotected stone quarry. "Warna that a Providence" was Jim's comment, and together they thanked God for their deliverance.

The Leaders from the earliest times were Francis and John Ball, T. Woollands, C. Woodhouse, Sen., John Turner, T. Raynes, John Ottewell, Thos. Courtney, Geo. Lowe, Saml. Calladine, Robt. Weston, Geo. Woodhouse and Stephen Weston.



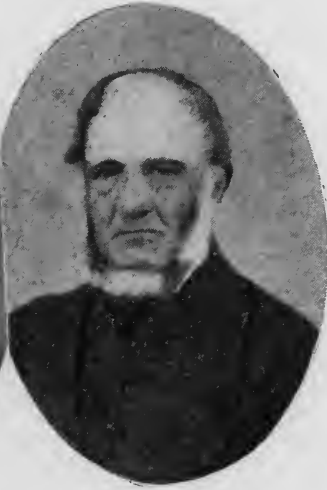
WOODHOUSE HILL TOP.
Cottage where services were held.

Jno. Weston was open-hearted, open-housed, always hospitable to the Preachers. He and his three sisters, Mrs. Eley, Mrs. Bunting and Mrs. Calladine, were an immense credit to their widowed mother, an old Methodist who had infused into her children her own hearty attachment to Methodism. Mr. Weston was elected a member of the first body of Poor Law Guardians in 1834.

Isaac Woodhouse was Society Steward and Superintendent for many years. The Society is spoken of as the liveliest in the



MR. R. WESTON.



MR. S. WESTON.

Circuit 60 years ago. It then supported two branches of out-lying Methodism—at Crow Trees there was a Class and Prayer meeting : and at Hill Top service was held in Wm. Redgate's Cottage, and Jos. Turner led the Class.

... 1903. ...

Members, 26. Scholars, 133. Teachers, 12.
Band of Hope, 62.

Leaders : Messrs. S. Calladine and S. Weston.

Stewards : Messrs. S. Calladine, W. Marshall, E. Bond and J. Hunt.

Sunday School Officers : Messrs. S. Weston, W. Marshall and S. Weston, Jun.

Organist : Mr. J. Weston.



MILFORD.

A SOCIETY existed here in 1807. The names of twenty-five are given in 1808. Wm. Adams and Saml. Alcock, Leaders. The first Methodists were a family named Adams, of Hopping Hill, another named Bridges of Makeney, and

Wm. and Mary Cash of Sunny Hill. Early in the century "Molly Cash" opened her house for preaching. In 1815 this good woman dreamed she saw a Fountain rise up in her house, and the stream, overflowing, ran part way down Sunny Hill and then disappeared in a garden. This was taken as a token that the Society should have its own house of prayer, and, accordingly, Molly and her friends built the first chapel on the exact spot indicated by the disappearance of the stream. In



THE CHAPEL—EXTERIOR.

1842 the present chapel was built on a new site, and, until the Reform movement, the cause was very flourishing, the chapel being often crowded. There were ninety members, and it is on record that there were as many as sixty present at the six o'clock Sunday morning prayer meetings. In 1837 there were 250 Scholars and 22 Teachers. William Lemon was Superintendent from the earliest times, succeeded in 1846 by John Holbrook, who was also a well-known Local Preacher. Wm. Bates and family were the leaders of the singing.

Some of the prominent members of this once strong Society were William Mather, Richard Wragg, Wm. Devill, Joseph Potts, James Waterfield, Wm. Rhodes, Robt. Winson, Louis Hingley, Saml. and Rose Sadler, Geo. Haywood, Thos. Taff, Elizabeth Morrell, Jno. Cheetham, S. Swain, Jno. Chadwick and Jos. Parkinson. Mrs. Allsopp, lately called to her reward, will long be remembered for her hospitable entertainment of the Preachers. She was a Mother in Israel to the small Society. Her husband Mr. Elijah Allsopp is one of the oldest Members in the Circuit, and has held all the local offices. Mr. David Smith was Society Steward for a long period, and Mr. H. Mansfield, Sunday School Superintendent. The Sunday School is prospering, and this is the great hope for the future of the Society under the blessing of God.



MRS. AND MR. E. ALLSOPP.

... 1903. ...

Members, 9. Scholars, 68. Teachers, 8.

Leader : Mr. J. Brown.

Stewards : Mr. E. Allsopp and Mr. D. Parkin.

Sunday School Officers : Messrs. G. W. Brindley, W. Street,
G. Cheetham.

Organist : Miss Oldknow.

HAZELWOOD.

THE earliest reference to a Society at "Hazzelwood" is in 1810, when the following formed a Class—John Goodwin, Leader, Matt. and Mary Shepherd, Jos. and Eliz. Hawkins, Wm. Cooper, Hannah and Mary Taylor, Mary Goodwin. In 1813 the Chapel was built on the site of an old saw-pit. It must have been very small—containing as it did only six forms and a cupboard-like pulpit. Built by the neighbouring farmers, it was completed within *a week*, and paid for at the opening. Twice enlarged it is still the smallest in the Circuit. Mr. and Mrs. John Goodwin living to extreme old age, were a direct



THE CHAPEL—EXTERIOR.

link with John Wesley's visits to Belper. The Leaders after John Goodwin were his son Joseph, Mr. Poulson and Mr. T. Yeomans. Mrs. Ride since 1862 has held most of the offices. The Sunday School was first commenced in her own kitchen at the Chevin. In 1889 it was transferred to the Chapel and is a hopeful branch of Methodist work in this tiny upland parish. It is pleasant to record that between the late Vicar, Mr. Jenkins,



MR. AND MRS. JOHN GOODWIN.

and the Society, cordial relations existed—and no week-nigh meetings were held in Church or Chapel to clash with each other.



MRS. RIDE.

MR. T. YEOMANS.

... 1903. ...

Members, 10.

Scholars, 40.

Teachers, 5.

Leader : Mr. J. Sutton.*Organist* : Miss Slater.*Stewards* : Mr. J. Sutton, Mrs. Ride, Mr J. Millward.*Sunday School Officers* : Mr. J., Sutton Mr. J. Millward.

KILBURNE.

TRADITION says that Kilburne Methodism was one of the Mission efforts of the Woodhouse Society. It is certain that the first Leader was a man residing in Woodhouse—Thomas Woollands—and that in 1810 the Class was returned under the heading of the older Society. It then consisted of 16 members. Wm. Langton, John and Eliz. Smith, Thos. and Mar. Radford, Wm. and Sarah Aldred, Fran. Elliott, Eliz. Hibbert, Saml. and Sarah Yeomans, Ann Sitdown, Mar. Stevenson, Jno. Warner and Ann Woolley. In 1812 this Class is first returned under the heading "Kilbourn." Mr. Woollands continued to lead it for 20 years. (There is a beautiful Memoir of his daughter in



THE CHAPEL—EXTERIOR.

the Magazine for 1815). He was then succeeded by Geo. Mather and Thos. Argyle. The first Chapel was built in 1832. Prior to this services were held in the cottages of Mrs. Padgett and "Betty" Yeomans. John Brentnall Woolley (father of the esteemed Chairman of Guardians), rendered splendid service to Methodism, and in the meetings was specially useful in starting the Tunes. The two oldest members were Wm. All-

dred and John Warner who were very zealous for the Lord of Hosts. So successful were these cottage services that a Chapel was resolved upon, the moving spirit being Thomas Argyle.

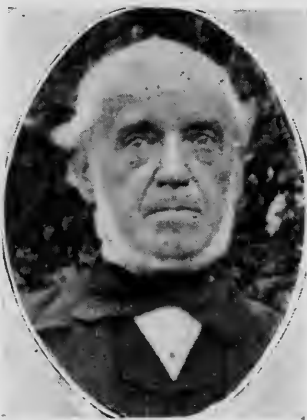


MR. W. W. BAILEY.



MR. T. ARGYLE.

This was a very humble building, the sitting accommodation being described as "two paid seats on either side and forms beyond." Twice enlarged, at last it had to give place to a new Chapel built in 1891 and cleared of debt through much effort



MR. G. PEAT.



MR. J. MIDDLETON.

and self sacrifice. Of the workers in connection with the first Chapel, W. W. Bailey is mentioned later, William and Harriett Wheatley, Wm. Crofts and Wm. Burgoyne, Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Wheatley, Charles Lander and his son James, and later Geo. Peat, H. Kerry and Mrs. Colledge are all precious names in connection with this Society.

The new Chapel is well attended, and the School vigorously maintained. Kilburne has produced in late years a number of well known Local Preachers.

... 1903. ...

Members, 78. Scholars, 184. Teachers, 28.
Band of Hope, 83.

Leaders : Mrs. Colledge, Mrs. Reeve, Mr. and Mrs. Beeston,
Mrs. Annable, Mr. and Miss Middleton.

Stewards : Messrs. J. West, T. Peat, G. Colledge and Beeston.

Sunday School Officers : Messrs. J. Middleton, T. Peat, J. and E. West.

Organist : Mr. Fenn Middleton.



POTTERY.

THERE is incidental mention of a Class at White Moor Hall in 1812, with Geo. Lowe as Leader and seven members. Pottery first appears among the Societies in 1816, with a Class of 20 *women*, with Richard Smedley—Leader. The men probably met in Belper Classes. Indeed for many years Pottery was not looked upon as a separate Society, but as an auxiliary to Belper. The Chapel was built in 1816, mainly through the efforts of the Bourne family who first established their Potteries here. In 1819 "The Committee of the Methodist Sunday School at Belper, are happy to state, that an Auxiliary Sunday School has been established at the Pottery in which 160 children are taught both to read the Word of Life, and the duties they owe to God and man." For more than 30 years it was worked under the Belper Committee, and the Collections appear to have been made alternately in the two Chapels. Saml. Froggatt was the first Superintendent—

succeeded by Wm. Bourne, Jun., Jos. Palmer, R. Levers, Jno. Longdon, R. Moore, G. W. Rowson, Jos. Walker, A. Bell, T. Harrison, Sen., Jno. Morley and Geo. Stone. The School has had a remarkably prosperous career, sending out into the world many good men and true—perhaps the best known being Messrs. Reuben and Laban Spencer, prominent citizens of Manchester. It appears to have reached its highest numbers in 1841 with 40 Teachers and 376 Scholars. This was the last School in the Circuit where we remember seeing copy books in use on the Sunday.



CHAPEL—EXTERIOR.

In early days the Chapel had a famous "Singing Pew" filled with an efficient Choir and Band. A few names are still remembered, Geo. Stone played the violin, Carlos Lovatt and Jno. Moore, Jun., the flute, and Saml. Walker, 'cello. The singers were Mary, Harriett, Ellen and Ann Spencer, Sarah and Hannah Booth, Ann and Hannah Moore, Ann Hart, Thos. and Ann Gregory, and John Moore, Sen. Later when an Organ was introduced, the interior of the Chapel was remodelled, and in 1870 a good schoolroom was built. The latest addition to

the Chapel was a stone porch, in character with the building—the gift of the late Mr. R. Spencer.



MR. T. HARRISON, SR.



MRS. AND MR. J. MARRIOTT.



... 1903. ...

Members, 29. Scholars, 199. Teachers, 20.

Leaders : Miss Taylor, Mrs. Good.

Stewards : Mrs. Phillips Mrs. Good, Messrs. W. Needham and L. F. Robinson.

Sunday School Officers : Messrs. J. Walters, S. Holland, F. Needham, J. Beardmore.

Organist : Mr. J. W. Walters.



AMBERGATE.

A CLASS of eleven Members existed at "Toad More" in 1819, some of whom had met previously in the Pentrich Class. The Leader was John Tomlinson, and the members Eliza Tomlinson, James and Eliza Booth, Ths. and Mar. Shendrick, Job and Sar. Thompson, John and Han. Harrison and Elizabeth Slack. In 1837 with 21 members under Bro. Taylor, the name was changed to Amber Gate. These pioneers were a faithful

few who had to struggle for existence. When they resolved to arise and build, their difficulties greatly increased. No land could then be obtained in the place, except from the Lord of the Manor, who, although frequently applied to, refused to sell for such a purpose. Nothing daunted, these godly people made the matter a subject for constant prayer, and took counsel of the Most High. Again it was resolved to prefer the same request—prior to this they held an all-night prayer meeting, and, whilst the deputation were on their mission, the members again met for prayer. Their persistency in the holy cause was rewarded, the Squire granting them a very small space, the worst and roughest corner in the whole neighbourhood. However, this proved a blessing in disguise, for, in clearing it, they found sufficient stone to make a level platform for their foundations above the adjoining roadway, which is here very steep. Stone for the chapel was also found in the neighbourhood, and



CHAPEL—EXTERIOR.

carted by the farmers, and many gave freely their labour who could not give money. Messrs. R. Hay, H. Adams, and W. Graves were the leading workers when the chapel was opened on Whit Tuesday, 1837, the Rev. G. B. Macdonald being the

preacher. On the following Sunday the three circuit ministers took a service each.

Afterwards for a long time the chapel was closed, and became very dilapidated, until the Rev. Henry Needle, about 1869, re-commenced the work, and Mr. William Ashton was put in charge. Eventually Mr. Charles Ball and his family went out from Belper every Sunday, re-opened the school, and put heart into the services—one of the finest bits of Home Missionary work the Circuit has seen.



MR. G. SMITH.



MR. J. VARNEY.

At this time Mr. Hy. Smith was providentially drawn to the services, and joining the Society, he became Superintendent in 1879. Mr. G. Fearn, Mr. J. Varney and other faithful labourers have helped to keep this outpost of the Circuit, and the Services, the School and the Guild are well sustained.

... 1903. ...

Members, 17. Scholars, 87. Teachers, 10.
Band of Hope, 30.

Leaders : Messrs. H. Smith and J. Varney.

Stewards : Messrs. J. Varney, A. J. Fortnam, G. and J. Key.

Sunday School Officers : Messrs. H. Smith, J. Key, J. Varney,
W. Steeples. *Organist* : Miss Brown.

LANE END.

Two Classes with twenty-five members are returned in the Belper Society for 1804.—as belonging to Lane End. The



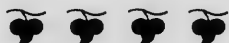
CHAPEL—EXTERIOR.



MR. W. WHITE.

Leaders were Joshua Nansel and Robt. Jackson. and the members include several Jacksons, Gregorys and Coopers.

The name however is soon lost, though later a Class was held at Dally—and Lane End does not appear again until the Chapel was built in 1849. Joseph Riley was the Leader for upwards of 40 years. The Sunday School was opened in 1856. Mr. Thomas White retained the office of Superintendent for a very long period. A few years ago, owing to a number of removals, the work here suddenly collapsed, and the place is unfortunately closed. Mr. J. L. Robinson retains the office of Steward and Treasurer. At the moment of writing there is a probability of the Chapel being re-opened. There is room for Methodism in this isolated hamlet, and workers are volunteering their services.

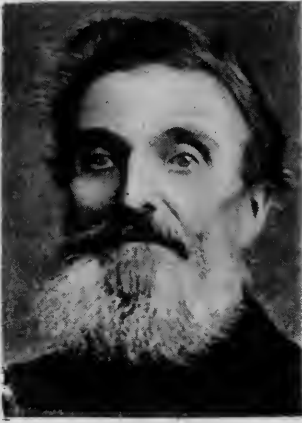


STREET LANE.

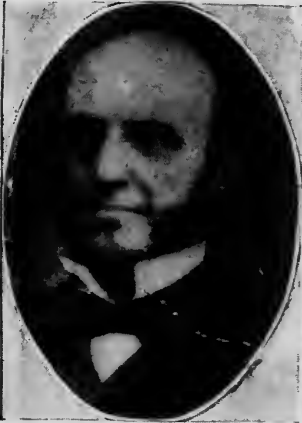
SOME portion of the history of Street Lane is given in the Circuit Chronicles. The Society seems to have been founded in a room at Denby Pottery. In 1837 the Leaders of Denby



THE CHAPEL—EXTERIOR.



REV. N. ROUSE.

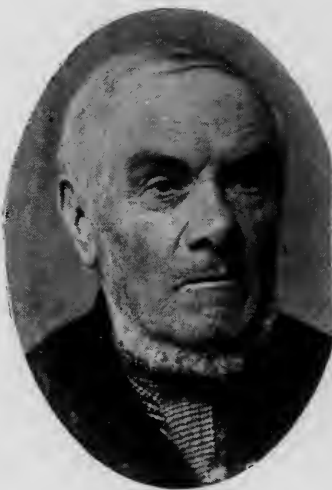


MR. J. H. BOURNE



MR. R. DALE.

and Denby Pottery were Charles Briggs, Wm. Bateman and John Cresswell, with a membership of 88. Scholars, 331. Teachers, 38. The first Chapel was built in 1841 by Joseph Bourne, and the Society migrated here. In 1862 Joseph Harvey Bourne called to the pastorate the Rev. Nathan Rouse—who laboured a faithful servant of God for 27 years. On his death he was succeeded by the Revs. J. B. Blanch, F. Ewer, J. Johnson and H. Burson. In 1898 the Society rejoined the Mother Circuit.



MR. J. CAULTON.



MRS. BOURNE.

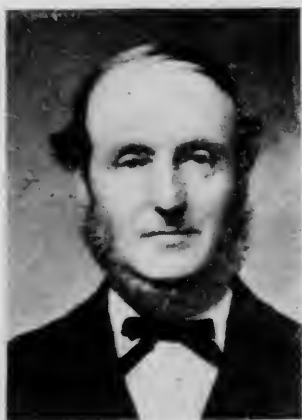


MR. A. PARKIN.

The Sunday School is probably as old as the Society. Its early Superintendents were Messrs. J. and J. H. Bourne, Robt. Dale and Wm. Hunt. Prominent among the Workers were the four sisters of Mr. J. H. Bourne, Mrs. Bourne and Miss Topham. It has been remarkable for the attachment to it of generations of the same families.

For many years there was a famous Band and Choir. Two of the working men members, Jno. Caulton and Timothy Briggs, spent 13 years of their leisure in building an organ, which was placed in the Chapel—the first organist being Mr. C. J. Dale, afterwards so well known in London Methodism.

Among the most famous members were R. Dale, T. Godkin, Sen., Saml. Parkin, J. Kerry, Ed. Beresford, Thos. Briggs, Jno. Caulton, Jos. Fowke, Mr. and Mrs. Jas. Fowke, and Mr. and Mrs. John Brown—the latter rejoicing in a membership of over 60 years.



MR. J. BROWN.



MR. A. BROWN.

... 1903. ...

Members, 30. Scholars, 195. Teachers, 18.

Band of Hope, 117.

Leaders : Mrs. Brown, Messrs. H. Fowke and A. Parkin.

Stewards : Messrs. A. Brown, H. Fowke, E. Parkin, S. Hunt.

Sunday School Officers : Messrs. J. Parkin, H. Fowke and J. Purdy.

Organist : Mr. C. Parkin.

DENBY BOTTLES.

THIS Society voluntarily joined the Circuit with Street Lane. The Chapel was the last built by Thomas Argyle, when eighty years of age. After repeatedly approaching the Street Lane Quarterly Meeting, and having established preaching in houses, he himself begged a site, gave £40 from his savings, and stumped the country side selling his own portrait and



THE CHAPEL—EXTERIOR.

getting subscriptions for the funds. For £90 a bare room was built, and the first service was conducted by Mr. J. M. Hogg, of Belper, in October, 1879. Enlarged and re-pewed in 1883, the work was carried on by Messrs. S. Wood, Hughes and Hy. Davis. The Sunday School has always been popular, and the Officers have had to refuse applicants for admission. A vigorous effort is now being made to extend the premises for

School purposes. Messrs. Matthews, Whysall, Calladine, and J. Wood are workers in this and in the Band of Hope.



MR. S. WOOD.

... 1903. ...

Members, 9. Scholars, 156. Teachers, 13.
Band of Hope, 164.

Leader : Mr. S. Wood.

Stewards : Miss Annable, Mr. J. Wood, Mr. S. Parkin.

Sunday School Officers : Messrs. J. and S. Wood and Matthews.

Organist : Mr. J. Wood.



Some Brief Biographies.

PARSON SLATER.

THE first Methodist in the Circuit was Thomas Slater, of Shottle. Born in 1738, he heard a sermon in Duffield Church on the General Judgment, about 1758, which awakened his conscience. In 1765 a stonemason came to erect a barn for him. A Member of the Methodist Society, he led Mr. Slater to the new Chapel at Crich. The second time he went God set his soul at liberty. The preacher was the Rev. Jos. Guilford, and the text "Is there no balm in Gilead." Mr. Slater stood all the time, and the floor was wet with his tears, but the Lord giving him all he desired—such great grace rested upon him that the change was manifest to the Congregation. His mind was so carried above that he scarce knew how to perform his journey of 5 miles home. At last he turned aside into a piece of waste ground and there "continued upon his knees blessing and praising God for about an hour, in which time his clothes were nearly frozen to the ground." As Class-leader, sick visitor, and especially as Local Preacher, he was unwearied for 50 years. About 1770, Rev. Thos. Olivers persuaded him to preach. He vowed on his knees that if the Lord would show him some fruits of his labour, he would preach the Gospel in every town and village in the County. In 1809 he declared he had fulfilled his covenant. He preached on one Sunday in the County towns of Leicester, Nottingham, and Derby, riding his famous mare. He had to endure persecution in many places. Stones and rotten eggs were often thrown, but he was never once hit with either. Preaching at Turnditch against a house—some person went to a chamber window and by means of a hooked stick, snatched off his wig and twirled it round in the sight of the people. But these things "never disturbed the serenity of his mind, or the delivery of his discourse." (See also Magazine 1823, Countess of Huntingdon's Memoirs Vol. 2, and Recorder Winter No., 1899).

Buried on the South side of Duffield Church, his tombstone bears the lines written by his friend and convert—Rev. Jos. Taylor.

THE BOURNE FAMILY.

ONE of Mr. Slater's converts was William Bourne, the first of the name to settle in Belper, and the founder of a family famous in Methodism. He was a strict Church goer, strongly prejudiced against the Methodists. On a Sunday afternoon in 1782, having a party of friends, one of them mentioned that Mr. Thomas Slater was to preach that evening "on the Market Place"—and most of them resolved to attend. Through much persuasion Mr. Bourne went also. The text was "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear." At first he stood outside the congregation, but "being amazed how a farmer could have so much to say without having it written down" he drew nearer, was convinced of the truth and to the surprise of his friends, shook hands with the Preacher.

Through several generations the family failed not to supply the Methodist Society with intelligent, devoted and consistent members, and from Mr. W. Bourne's conversion in 1782, the well being of the Circuit was largely the result of the labours of these men.

Of his four sons—William, Edward, John and Joseph—the first three predeceased their father; they were all godly men. Joseph became a prominent and honoured Methodist. The founder of the Denby and Street Lane Societies and Schools, he was the venerable patriarch of these places, beloved and esteemed alike as an employer and an earnest philanthropic Christian. The agitation of 1849 nearly broke his heart; with moistened eyes he would exclaim "Oh! is there no way of keeping us together still?" His daughter was married to the Rev. W. Griffiths. His son Mr. J. H. Bourne, carried out the spirit of his father's work—but practically on Free Methodist lines. He married Sarah Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. J. C. Topham of Belper, who survived her husband 30 years. As the mother of her people she united in loving service for God—the best traditions of the two noble families she represented.

Another grandson of Mr. Bourne, Sen., was William Bourne, Jun., of Belper Pottery, where he was Superintendent, Class Leader, and Local Preacher. The late Dr. Benj. Gregory records that it was under one of his addresses in this same school, "tender, urgent and effective, that I was very powerfully affected—about a fortnight before my conversion, when I was twelve years of age." All the above named are buried in the

Belper Chapel Yard—their epitaphs engraved in stone—their memory still engraved on the hearts of men.

MR. WM. PALMER.

IN 1791, the founder of another prominent family came to reside at Belper—Mr. Wm. Palmer—a man of influence and position for many years, who besides his Belper offices served the Circuit as Steward and Local Preacher. The beau ideal of a respectable old Methodist Tradesman of that day—he possessed a fine portly figure, always neatly dressed, with white neckerchief, frilled shirt front, knee breeches, and high boots with brown tops. A strict disciplinarian, *teachers* and scholars knew they must behave themselves in his presence. Benj. Gregory wrote an elegy on his death commencing:—

Palmer is from thy children gone

No longer here thy sons to teach.

His son Joseph was a remarkable Local Preacher, and a leader of the Reformers.

REV. BENJAMIN GREGORY, Sen.

THE Rev. Benjamin Gregory, Sen., was born at Little Eaton, and became a farm labourer at Denby. Converted in early life, he was accustomed to attend the prayer meetings at Crow Trees. At one of the meetings—the Leader said “Benjamin, thou mun preach.” He could not then read, and feeling this to be a great hindrance, he made desperate efforts without apparent success to acquire the art. One day he went into Denby Church-yard and prayed fervently for help. He tried to make out a verse in the Testament but failed. He prayed with increased fervour, when to his astonishment and delight on opening his eyes he found he could read with ease the inscription on the tombstone as well as the Testament. Leaping the Church wall, he ran to tell his mother the joyful news. Mr. Gregory said many times he could read then as well as at any later period of his life. He became a Local Preacher and entered the Ministry in 1799. A simpler, truer, more thorough man never joined its ranks. A fervent preacher, a soul winner, a devoted student of the best literature, and a poet, Belper had the honour not only of sending him into the work, but also of receiving him as a Supernumary 1829-1849. More stories centre round his quaint personality than that of any other man in the history of the Circuit. (See City Road Mag. 1874-5). Buried in Belper Chapel Yard, it is not to the credit of his contemporaries that no tombstone or tablet record his worth.

His son—the late Rev. B. Gregory, D.D., though not born here—naturally made Belper his home until he entered the Ministry in 1841. His reminiscences in the Magazine 1890-3 are a storehouse of local history. He describes the Belper of 1830—40 as the *rudest* place but one he ever knew.

MR. J. C. TOPHAM.

MR. J. C. TOPHAM, who commenced business in Belper in 1819, was a tower of strength to the Circuit for 40 years. Day by day he brought his religion into his business. The young men of his establishment were the special objects of his solicitude and care. He was Leader, Trustee, and Steward, serving with great efficiency, but his chief sphere of influence was as Superintendent of the Sunday School. Here his happiest hours were spent and many bless God for his useful labours. He died in 1864, and his tablet in the Chapel records he was “a true lover of all who love the Lord Jesus, and a humble devoted follower of the Saviour” (see Magazine 1865).

MR. W. W. BAILEY.

MR. W. W. BAILEY for many years rendered yeoman service both to Kilburne and to the Circuit. His conversion was the direct result of the faithful pleadings of Thomas Argyle. This remarkable man, going to the School one Sabbath morning, passed Mr. Bailey, leaning over his own gate, with the question “Why stand ye here all the day idle,” without waiting for an answer. But it was as a nail in a sure place; it led to long spiritual conversations, and to Mr. Bailey’s acknowledgment of Christ as his Saviour. In the old Chapel at the love feast he would stand where, through one of the windows, he could see and point to the barn where the Lord spoke peace to his soul. In the Young Men’s Class, in the Singing Pew, and as Superintendent of the Sunday School, he served with ability and faithfulness until his death. And for a very long period he was Circuit Steward, rendering in that and other capacities great service to the Belper Circuit. On completing 22 years of office as Steward, the Circuit presented him in 1873 with an address. His life-size portrait adorns the Kilburne Schoolroom.

“We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work Thou didst in their days, in the times of old.”

“Arise for OUR help, and redeem US for Thy mercies sake.”

